

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Western District of TexasUnited States of America
v.
Maria Rosario VELO BARRON

Case No.

EP:18-mj-3296-RFC

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of 05/12/2018 in the county of El Paso in the
Western District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section


Title 21 U.S.C. § 846

Offense Description

Conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a quantity of Marijuana, to wit:
approximately 77.06 kgs (gross weight) of Marijuana, a Schedule I Controlled
Substance;

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

SEE ATTACHED AFFIDAVIT

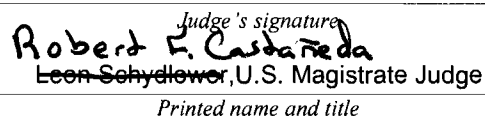
☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Complainant's signature

Miguel Diaz CBP TFO

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 05/14/2018City and state: El Paso, Texas
Robert F. Castañeda
Leon Schydower, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

Affidavit

On May 12, 2018, United States (US) Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers were conducting pre-primary roving operations at the Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) Port of Entry (POE) in El Paso, Texas, which is within the Western District of Texas. At approximately 1320 hours Narcotics Detector Dog (NDD) "JOEP" alerted to the front bumper area of a red in color 2018 Nissan Versa bearing Mexican plate number EMX1389 that entered the US from the Republic of Mexico. Maria Rosario VELO BARRON with a DOB of 06/28/1967 was the driver and sole occupant of the Nissan Versa.

Canine Enforcement Officer (CEO) J. Hantzsche was roving pre-primary with CEO J. Samaniego when his NDD "JOEP" alerted to the front bumper of a Nissan Versa. After the canine alert Officer Samaniego proceeded to open the hood and noticed yellow taped bundles inside the engine area. At that time Officer Samaniego began interviewing VELO BARRON about her destination to which she stated that she was going downtown to buy a perfume. VELO BARRON claimed ownership of the vehicle and stated that she is the only one that drives the vehicle. VELO BARRON stated that she has owned the vehicle for about a year and a half and claimed ownership of everything in the vehicle. During the interview Officer Samaniego noticed that VELO BARRON's carotid artery was pumping excessively. Officer Samaniego also noticed that VELO BARRON's hands were shaking when she handed over her entry documents.

After Officer Samaniego was finished interviewing VELO BARRON, Officer Hantzsche began his interview of VELO BARRON. Officer Hantzsche asked VELO BARRON where she was going to which VELO BARRON replied to buy a perfume somewhere downtown. VELO BARRON declared to have \$50 US dollars in her possession. VELO BARRON claimed ownership of the vehicle and stated no one else drives the vehicle. VELO BARRON further stated that no repairs had been done to her vehicle. Officer Hantzsche asked VELO BARRON how long she had owned her vehicle to which she stated four years. Officer Hantzsche then asked VELO BARRON what year was her vehicle to which she responded with 2018. Officer Hantzsche asked VELO BARRON if she was bringing any drugs and she answered no. VELO BARRON stated that she did not have anything to declare.

Inspection of the vehicle revealed a total of 153 bundles wrapped in yellow tape concealed in the front bumper, front quarter panels, and rear quarter panels. A green leafy substance was extracted from a random bundle and field tested, testing positive for the properties of Marijuana. The total aggregated weight of the bundles was 77.06 kilograms (169.90 pounds).

U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent (SA) Kevin Parks and CBP Task Force Officer (TFO) Miguel Diaz, assigned to the HSI Port Disrupt Group, arrived at BOTA POE and began an investigation. TFO Diaz in the presence of SA Parks advised VELO BARRON of her Miranda Rights in Spanish. VELO BARRON acknowledged her rights and agreed to speak with the agents without the presence of counsel. The interview

was conducted in the Spanish language and was video recorded. VELO BARRON confessed that she answered a Facebook advertisement about taking money from El Paso, TX to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. VELO BARRON stated that she began talking to a subject known as Luiz Pedroza who offered to pay her \$500 US dollars for taking \$5000 US dollars from El Paso, TX to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. VELO BARRON stated that she began talking to Luiz Pedroza in March of 2018. VELO BARRON further stated that this was her third time doing it. Investigation of VELO BARRON's phone revealed that she had been talking to Luiz Pedroza since around December 2017 and had started working for him since around January 2018 earning \$700 US dollars per trip.

I make this affidavit on the basis of my personal knowledge and information furnished to me by other law enforcement officers.